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**American Ambassador, Minister of Education Record Audio Lessons for Primary School Students**

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**Kigali** - Beginning in 2016, P4 students in Rwanda's public schools will hear two distinguished voices in their classroom instruction. The U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, Erica J. Barks-Ruggles, and the Honorable Minister of Education, Silas Lwakabamba, visited the audio-visual recording studio yesterday at the Rwanda Education Board (REB), where interactive audio lessons and teacher training videos are produced. The Ambassador and Minister toured the studio and each recorded an audio story which will be used in P4 classrooms across the country next year.

The \$75,000 audio-visual recording studio was installed in May 2012 by the Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative, a program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that is implemented by the Education Development Center. USAID's L3 Initiative develops a comprehensive package of Kinyarwanda, mathematics, and English learning materials for use in Rwandan schools nationwide. This includes interactive audio lessons that teachers play in their classrooms using cellphones and portable speakers. Today, all public primary schools across the country are using these materials for P1, P2, and P3. Minister Lwakabamba explained, "Adopting a learner centered approach will go hand-in-hand with using technology to develop critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration."

The Ambassador and Minister began their visit at Remera Catholic Primary School to observe a P3 English lesson in practice. The teacher played an audio program that demonstrates proper English pronunciation of the short stories that are read by the students. This type of practice in English pronunciation will assist the students when they transition to English as a medium of instruction in P4. The audio programs also promote a positive culture of reading by presenting it as an enjoyable activity and exposing the students to a range of interesting fiction and nonfiction stories.



In the audio-visual studio, the Ambassador and Minister each recorded a short story that will be included in P4 learning materials, which will be implemented in schools nationwide beginning in January 2016. The Ambassador read “The Story of Cat and Mouse,” a clever narrative about a mouse’s attempt to retrieve his tail from a cat. The Minister recorded a short poem entitled “Fix that Noise!” about a carpenter and plumber who repair broken items in a house. Both stories support Rwanda’s new competence-based curriculum.

“The United States is committed to partnering with the Government of Rwanda to support and strengthen literacy and English language skills because they are critical to improving learning outcomes,” said Ambassador Barks-Ruggles. “We can also use technology to make reading interesting and fun for the students, and help to nurture a lifelong love of reading.”

*The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the foreign assistance agency of the United States Government. USAID supports \$150 million (105 billion RwF) of development assistance annually to Rwanda, with programs in health, economic development, education, and democracy and governance.*